

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

**GUIDELINE FOR NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION**

**I. SUMMARY**

This guideline applies to all new employees of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and stipulates that they participate in an orientation program within two weeks of initial employment. The primary objective of such an orientation program is to enable employees to understand the vision, mission, guiding principles, objectives, directives, major policies and organizational structure of the Department as a whole and of the particular Employing unit, and to receive a general overview of the employee's responsibilities.

The Chief, Training Services Division is responsible for the development of general orientation programs, conducting the General Orientation Program at Headquarters, acting as a consultant for units in the development of orientation programs and, if necessary, the training of orientation personnel. The Director of each Administration is responsible for having orientation programs established at all facilities and independent units and for informing Training Services Division of the orientation personnel.

**II. BACKGROUND**

DHMH's Office of Human Resources (OHR) is aware that an employee who adjusts to the work environment in an organization and develops a feeling of knowing and of being at home with his/her associates is one who will learn faster, produce more and, in general, be a better worker. Through the orientation process, the employee becomes aware and appreciative of the roles and opportunities for occupational achievement and advancement within the operating unit and departmental framework. Orientation is the first formal training a new employee experiences in the Department.

**III. GUIDELINE STATEMENTS**

**A. Definitions**

1. "Department" means the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.
2. "Employing Unit" means a major geographic location, i.e., a facility under one of the Department's administrations, a free standing facility, a local health department, the Central Office, etc.
3. "Primary Work Setting" means the specific work unit to which an employee is assigned.
4. "Orientation" means a general acquainting program organized centrally in the employing unit which is reflective of content guidelines of this guideline and provides an overview of the employing unit AND a specific acquainting program conducted by the employee's supervisor or designee in the primary work setting through which the employee develops an understanding of his/her own particular responsibilities and relationship to the unit as a whole.

**B. General Terms**

1. All employees of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene have the right to, and shall participate in, an orientation program within two (2) weeks of initial employment and, as appropriate, periodically throughout their employment with the Department.
2. The orientation program shall be as defined in Section A, Definitions, directly above.

C. Content Guidelines

1. The General Orientation Program shall include:
  - a. Vision, mission, guiding principles, objectives and goals of the Department; and of the Employing Unit, where appropriate.
  - b. An orientation to core principles and practices of continuous quality improvement and of the disciplines of the learning organization, information on the Department's and Employing Unit's current quality and learning initiative, and a general description of the employee's role in implementing quality service in a customer-focused organization.
  - c. A briefing on the Maryland Performance Planning and Evaluation Program (PEP) that will acquaint the employee with the essential features of the State's performance management and appraisal processes.
  - d. A briefing on the State's current drug testing policy and protocol.
  - e. An overview of the Department's prohibitions against discrimination and sexual harassment.
  - f. The appropriate personnel policies of the Department of Budget & Management's Office of Human Resources and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene -- to include Policy DHMH 4182 (Policy on Smoking), Policy DHMH 4144 (Policy on Sexual Harassment), Notice to Employees of Rights Under FMLA, and the Software Copyright Policy -- and the Employing Unit. (Only the most relevant personnel policies should be communicated with an overview of others. New employees should know whom to contact and where to find information to answer their future questions.)
  - g. The educational, mandatory training and career development opportunities available to personnel.
  - h. The relevant unit programs including community and facility based programs that work in cooperation with each other.
  - i. Worker safety, security and major risk management policies, practices, and procedures, including fire safety and fire extinguisher demonstrations where appropriate.
  - j. The role of the Volunteer Services Office and its relationship to all disciplines in the employing unit.
  - k. A presentation by employee union representative(s).
2. As much as possible, the program should be interdisciplinary, and make use of a variety of educational methods that will stimulate questions and enhance learning. The program should be a minimum of 1 day in length. The Primary Work Setting Orientation will vary but should include:
  - a. Receipt and review of the new employee's position description form (MS-22), with particular emphasis on essential job functions and performance standards;
  - b. pertinent rules/regulations, etc.;
  - c. Introductions to staff;
  - d. Tour of the work area; and,
  - e. The relationship of the smaller working unit to the larger unit.

#### **IV. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. The Director of each Administration is responsible for seeing that the appointing authority or head of a facility:
  - 1. Implements a general orientation program and orientation to the Employing Unit and Primary Work Setting for all new employees of the facility or independent unit.
  - 2. Appoints a person to be responsible for conducting the general orientation program.
  - 3. Notifies the Training Services Division of the name of the person responsible for the conducting of the general orientation program.
- B. Small Units that have limited staffing and low employee turnover may send new employees to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Central orientation or to the General Orientation Program of a larger unit within geographic proximity. General Orientation could be handled by a small unit on a one-to-one basis.
- C. Training Services Division conducts the General Orientation Program for all employees within the Central Offices of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.
- D. The Chief of Training Services or his/her designee(s) is responsible for:
  - 1. Developing general orientation materials;
  - 2. Offering supporting consultation to units for developing and/or using:
    - a. Materials specific to those units;
    - b. Methods and procedures for conducting orientation programs; and
    - c. Methods and procedures for updating orientation.
  - 3. Acting as liaison between the units and the Office of the Secretary to achieve the intent of this policy.
  - 4. Providing training opportunities for orientation Coordinators to share training innovations with other Coordinators and to update the content of their local programs.

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